

SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA

Naples decided to expel all the Florentines from her dominions, and to take up arms on behalf of the Church. When the news reached Florence, on August 16, Ristoro Canigiani and Benedetto Strozzi were instantly sent as ambassadors of the Commune to induce Giovanna to reconsider her decision ; and the inclusion of Messer Ristoro in the embassy is a striking sign of the unity of all parties among the Florentines for the defence of the Republic.¹ They were unsuccessful in their mission ; but, in September, the forces of the Queen, advancing to the relief of Ascoli, were completely routed and driven back by Bartolommeo di Smeduccio. At the beginning of the same month, a conspiracy was discovered to betray Bologna to the Cardinal of Geneva and the Marquis of Ferrara ; several Bolognese citizens were executed, others put under bounds.

The actual rupture of the negotiations came from the Pope. According to the Florentines, the terms offered them amounted to the desertion of their allies, the revolted cities of the Papal States, and the payment of an indemnity of three million florins. Even to the papal delegates, Cardinals d'Estaing and Aycelin, this seemed excessive, and they proposed certain modifications, to which Gregory answered that he would rather suffer the martyrdom of St. Bartholomew than consent. He sent the chamberlain, Pierre de Cros, with an abrupt order to the ambassadors instantly to depart from the court. The three arrived at Florence on September 22, and their report, formally delivered before the Signoria and a council of a number of chief citizens, *richiesti*, raised the utmost indignation and alarm throughout the city. On the day after their arrival, the Eight wrote to Bernabo Visconti that the coming of the Pope to Italy was now certain, and that it

¹ *Diarlo <F dnonimo Florentine*, pp. 313, 314. But, with regard to another disciple of Catherine, we may notice that the Eight wrote to the Bolognese on August 19, exhorting them to prorogue to another time the election of Pietro, Marchese del Monte Santa Maria, as their captain, not because for his virtues he is not a man worthy of the greatest honours, but only because of his excessive devotion to the Church, and because he is closely related to the Ubaldini, their deadly enemies. Gherardi, *op. at.*, document 294.